Conversation with John Crewdson CONFIDENTIAL HW 10/4/75

In the midst of the last-minute Post Mortem chaos Crewdson phoned this afternoon. This meo is written while Lil does some retyoing and can't cover the hour and a half we talked. Although he did not say so, I believe it was at Martin Waldron's suggestion. Crewdson is working on what superficially is a legit news story:

While both the CIA and FBI never trusted Nosenko, they never told the Commission.

His sources are Angleton and Sullivan. He regards them as of different political views. I suggested he consider political needs rather than views and they share these.

He also says he has never seen FBI people as scared as they are now and attributes it to the fact that the Oswald note was destroyed by Hosty, who was told by Shanklin, who was told by Moore, who had Hoover explode all over him and order the destruction. All in existing affidavits. I had told him to begin with that the statements would be restricted and when he completed the story I said they were. He believes the official account (he says both were in the one note) and I said I don't but would not tell him why.

I told him there could be fear of this alone but the greater fear is of the whole thing coming apart. (He thinks it will in a year.)

Crewdson seems to have some belief that LHO worked for the Russians. But he also has interest in how he learned Russian in the military. He theorized that it was for NSA's monitoring and because of his knowledge of electronics. I siggested that a man with as little commoand of his mother tongue and less of Russian was not a likely selection. He agreed.

He does seem persuaded that his sources are sincere. I assured him their beliefs and needs alone assured this but that did not make it factual. That Nosenko risked his life with what he said.

C. is familiar with the two FBI reports only. But I did tell him I'm working on this and have been, am suing for what I am sure will include it, have asked the CIA for other declassification and been stonewalled, and that I have found no paper reflecting that the CIA gave the Commission anything on Nosenko.

He seems not to have gotten my hint about political needs and I refused to tell him what I'm going to be writing about and have partly written. I did tell him of the books for which.

One possible interpretation is that the agencies are again feeding the stuff that the Russians (not this time the Cubans) were responsible for the assassination. LHO being the 1) killer and 2) a Russian agent of some kind. With Nosenko lying.

What is in his mind and what he is working on can make headlines but not fact.

He also didn't get the hint when I told him that CIA liaison with the Commission was under Angleton, with Helms figuring in some. If Angleton had suspcions about Nosenko,, unless he knew the Commission was not going to touch it, why not let them know his suspicions?

My impression is that he yearns for this story and not for devil's advocacy, which could kill his story.

We talked of other things. His Waterhate/Mexico understanding andinterests are limited to Ogarrio. I told him he was chasing the wrong spoor when he was looking for sugar money. He'd forgotten this. He did say he had Virginio Gonzalez working on it. This is the name of the man who signed the Johnny Meier affidavit.

My mind returned to this when Lil started doing some retyping and I recalled forgetting to tell him that for all those years the story was not leaked. Not until Gordon Shanklin retired. I called back. He was not there. I left limited word, including this and my believe I know who did the leaking and why.

He says they now have affidavits from some 40 FBI agents, which does indicate a serious effort. (He called it investigation. I think coverup.) Wiht Hoover dead that part is all explained. His account is that when Hoover learned he really erupted and ordered the destruction. Maybe. But it would have been a lot safer, if the letter had not been logged, as aparently it had not been, to have it flown to Washington and not had all these people who were going to outlive Hoover and could talk later.

We rambled into much but this is the essence (as hours later I recall it) of what he had to say about these agencies, Oswald and that letter.